PACKAGING

THE CAHNERS MAGAZINE FOR DECISION-MAKERS/NOVEMBER 1989

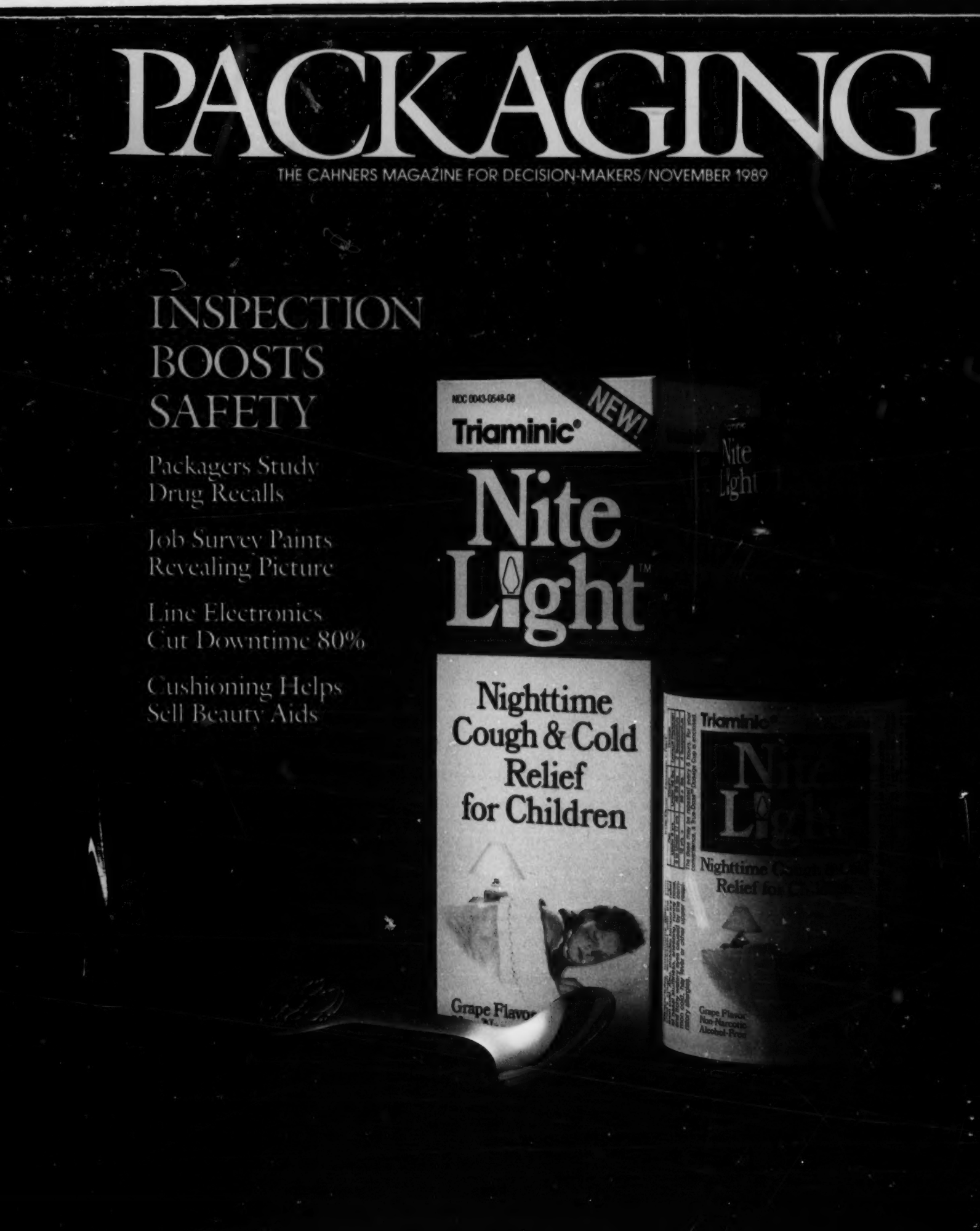
INSPECTION BOOSTS SAFETY

Packagers Study Drug Recalls

Job Survey Paints Revealing Picture

Line Electronics Cut Downtime 80%

Cushioning Helps Sell Beauty Aids



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PACKAGING formerly Package Engineering including Modern Packaging (ISSN 0748-3820) is published monthly, except in February, March, June, and August when two issues are published, in national, demographic and separate editions by The Cahners Publishing Company, A Division of Reed Publishing USA, 275 Washington Street, Newton MA 02158-1630. Terrence M. McDermott, President; Charles E. Moodhe, Senior Vice President/General Manager, Chicago Division; Jerry D. Neth, Vice President/Publishing Operations; J.J. Walsh, Financial Vice President/Magazine Division; Thomas J. Dellamaria, Vice President/Production and Manufacturing. Circulation records are maintained at Cahners Publishing Company, 44 Cook Street, Denver, CO 80206-5800. Phone 303/388-4511. Second-class postage paid at Denver, CO 80206-5800 and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address corrections to PACKAGING at our Denver address. PACKAGING formerly Package Engineering including Modern Packaging, copyright 1989 by Reed Publishing USA; Ronald G. Segel, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer; Robert L. Krakoff, President and Chief Operating Officer; William M. Platt, Sr. Vice President.

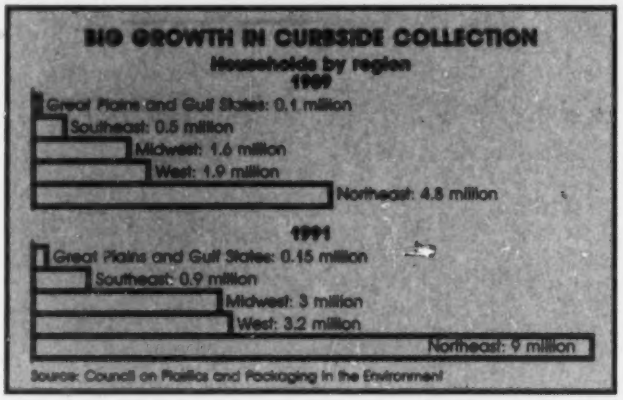
ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

Curbside Could Double By 1991

COPPE sees big jump in plastics collection

Twenty percent of all U.S. households could be taking part in curbside collection of recyclables by 1991, says a new study released by the Council on Plastics and Packaging in the Environment.

Prepared for COPPE by the consulting firm Resource Integration Systems Ltd., the report foresees a doubling of the present level of participation within the next two years.



The report also projects that curbside collection of rigid plastic containers made of PET, HDPE and other resins could grow from the current level of 1.7 million U.S. households to 16 million between now and '91. As a result, nearly 90,000 tons of all types of rigid plastic containers could be being collected by the end of that year.

In addition, the study estimates residential packaging discards at 1 pound per person per day. Of the 379 pounds of packaging discarded per person per day, only 50 pounds consists of plastic packaging.

COPPE's report also lists suggestions to make plastics collection increasingly attractive:

1. Improve participation rates through aggressive promotion at local, state and federal levels.
2. Reduce costs of collection and handling by including plastics at the start.
3. Improve markets and prices through long-term contracts by processing mixed plastics and by pooling the loads from several small collection programs.
4. Reduce contamination through improved education programs for collection crews and the public in general.

For more information about the activities of COPPE, circle Reader Service No. **427**.

Stretch Labels Aid Recycling

Rutgers praises adhesive-free system

The Center for Plastics Recycling Research at Rutgers has found stretch labels to simplify the recycling of plastic soft-drink bottles.

Thomas Nosker of the CPRR says, "The ideal solution for recycling is to have a package made of easily separable components so that they can be chopped, washed and separated . . . as quickly, cheaply and easily as possible to keep recycling costs low."

Says Nosker, "The stretchable Auto-Sleeve labels do not require glue or solvents to be held to the bottle, and this is an advantage for recycling." He adds, "I think this label is a much-needed thing. It shows that the plastics industry and plastics users are beginning to consider recyclability as a part of the products they are creating."

The Auto-Sleeve label gets its stretchability from a polyethylene blend. During the labeling process, gripper jaws on the labeling machine detach each one-piece label from a roll, pull it down over a bottle and release it. The label fits tightly against the bottle without adhesive.

For more information, circle Reader Service No. **430**.

Recyclers Use Resin Maker's Technology

PET bottles are the raw material

PETe Polymers of Roosevelt, N.Y., and La Mar Plastics, Long Island, are putting post-consumer polyethylene terephthalate bottles to use in innovative recycling operations. Both companies are utilizing technology patented by Fina Oil and Chemical.

La Mar is using a Fina technique to supply vacuum-formed trays, box inserts and formed component parts made of 100 percent recycled soft-drink bottles. The products are priced competitively with similar items made of utility-grade high-impact styrene.

PETe Polymers has become the first commercial user of Finaprene, a rubber modifier, which is used in the impact modification of recycled PET. The resulting copolymer replaces ABS and other resins in selected injection-molding, extrusion and vacuum-forming operations. A new plant in Detroit is expected to begin processing as much as 10 million pounds of the material this fall.

For more information, circle Reader Service No. **429**.

U.S. Leads In Landfilling

Europe and Japan reuse, burn plastics

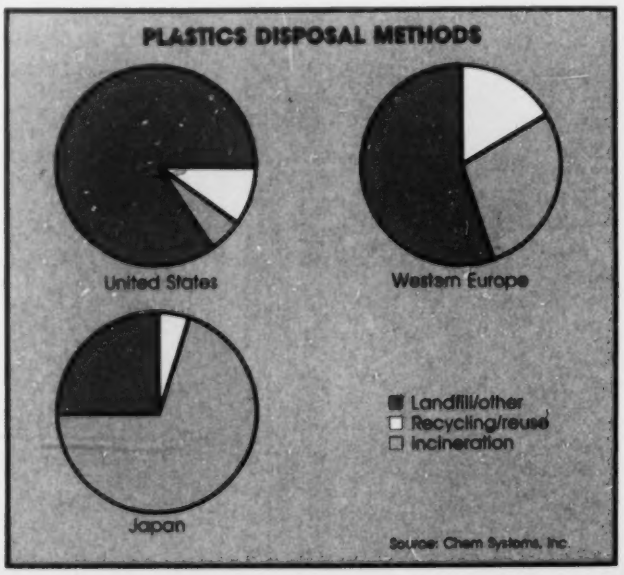
A new study from Chem Systems, Inc., shows the U.S. landfilling far more plastic waste than Western Europe and Japan.

The study, titled "Global Plastics Disposability: Alternate Solutions," concludes that "the United States trails behind the other industrialized nations in utilizing the more practical . . . methods of recycling and incineration."

At present, according to Chem Systems, the U.S. landfills 85 percent of all plastics waste. Western European countries landfill 55 percent and Japan buries 25 percent.

Reliance on landfills has affected interest in plastics that break down. "U.S. consumers believe that degradability is the answer to reducing plastics waste," the report says. "Their influence with legislators has led to laws requiring a ban or tax on materials that are not degradable."

For a copy of the study, circle Reader Service No. **428**.



Survey Paints Portrait of Today's Packaging Pros

Respondents to our exclusive annual study seem concerned, committed and at ease with their jobs

By Greg Erickson Senior Editor

Experienced. Well-educated. Well-paid and willing to say so. Challenged by his job and not the least bit bored with it. A little edgy, perhaps, about constraints imposed by both internal and external forces, yet confident. In essence, that's the packaging professional of today.

That flattering composite profile results from PACKAGING's 1989 Career Survey, an in-depth study of members of the now-combined SPHE and Packaging Institute International. Of the 2,000 questionnaires we mailed, 800 were returned—a better than 25 percent rate of response.

Here are a few of the interesting averages the data allowed us to calculate.

- Average length in years of experience in the packaging field: 14.2.
- Average number of years at the present job: 11.5.
- Percent respondents having some management responsibilities: 81.6.
- Average number of people supervised by those in management: 10.8.
- Average annual income: $55,400.
- Percent of total on-the-job time spent on packaging-related activities: 71.7.
- Percent of respondents who waited more than four years for their most recent promotion: 25.
- Percent that haven't yet been promoted: 18.9.
- Percent listing TV as their most-valued means of relaxing: 15.6.

Are you average? Or are you off on one or the other end of the packaging-career spectrum? Keep reading. You'll find yourself in here somewhere.

RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

Percent

Regions

Northeast	Midwest	South	West
29.1	36.9	21.6	11.9

Sex

Male	Female
89.9	8.6

Age

26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	61 +
11.7	14.0	14.6	14.8	15.1	10.5	9.6	7.9

Formal Education

H.S. Grad	Attended college	Earned Bachelors degree	Earned Masters	Doctorate/other
3.9	17.7	57.9	16.4	3.3

Annual Income (Thousand $)

<30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-100	>100
6.5	19.5	22.6	17.8	11.5	8.8	5.2	7.8

Years in Packaging Field

<3	3-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	>20
3.2	11.0	22.2	16.4	13.9	33.4

Title

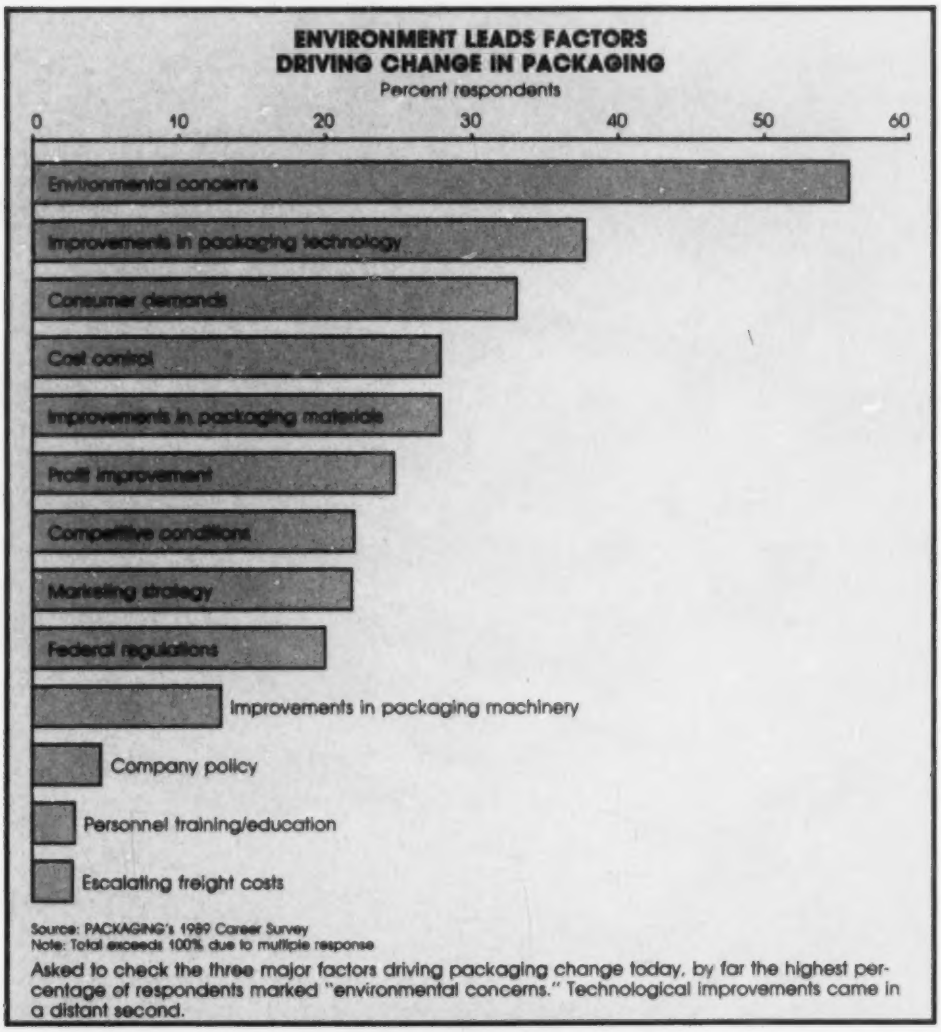
Packaging/Project Engineer	Senior Packaging Engineer	Manager/Director of Packaging	Administration	Other
19.5	18.8	23.2	9.7	26.7

Feelings About Pay

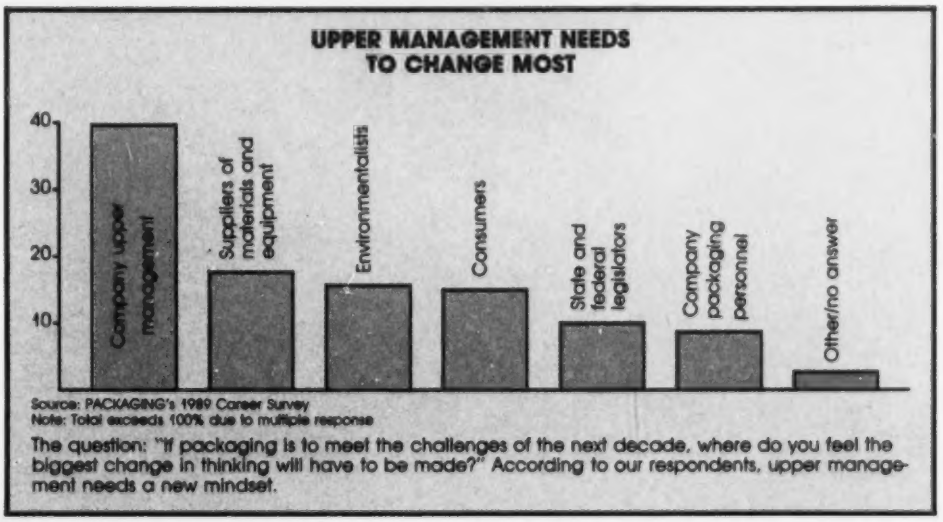
Underpaid	Paid right amount
44.4	53.3

Source: PACKAGING's 1989 Career Survey
Note: Results may not total 100% due to exclusion of statistically irrelevant responses.

The average packager has been in the field 14 years; in his present job, 11.5



Asked to check the three major factors driving packaging change today, by far the highest percentage of respondents marked "environmental concerns." Technological improvements came in a distant second.



The question: "If packaging is to meet the challenges of the next decade, where do you feel the biggest change in thinking will have to be made?" According to our respondents, upper management needs a new mindset.

You may have noticed that we used the masculine pronoun in the introduction—"his" job. We did that not just because it's easier to read than "his or her" but also because the impact of the female packaging professional on the field, for better or worse, remains small. Less than 9 percent of our respondents are women. They're younger than the men and are, for the most part, relatively inexperienced: Barely half of them have been in packaging more than five years.

Not surprisingly, the average annual income of the female packagers polled is less than that for the men: $41,700 vs. $56,468. Even so, more than 50 percent of the women (as well as more than half the men) say they are paid about the right amount. And 60 percent of the women—compared with only 49 percent of the men—say they were satisfied with the amount of their last raise.

Bachelors abound

We're talking degrees here. (In fact, when it comes to marital status, singles are rare—only 18 percent of the total.) Nearly 60 percent of all our respondents say they earned a B.A. or B.S. in college. More than 16 percent report going on to earn their Masters. Over one-third of our respondents say they received formal packaging-related education in college. Almost two-thirds tell us they have augmented their university work with continuing education and seminars in packaging-specific topics. Nevertheless, 48.5 percent of all respondents say they feel job experience is more important than formal education for a packaging professional.

"Engineer" is a prevalent word in the titles of our respondents. Roughly one-fifth are packaging/project engineers; another fifth are senior packaging engineers.

Approximately 18 percent are managers of packaging. Although only 9.7 percent of our survey subjects label themselves "administration," almost 40 percent of all respondents say they believe administration and management skills to be more important to their job than packaging expertise.

No threat

Despite all the buyouts, mergers and acquisitions that seem to be shrinking the number of corporate players in the field of packaging (as well as others), our respondents seem to feel secure. Only 21 percent of them say they feel threatened by all the consolidation.

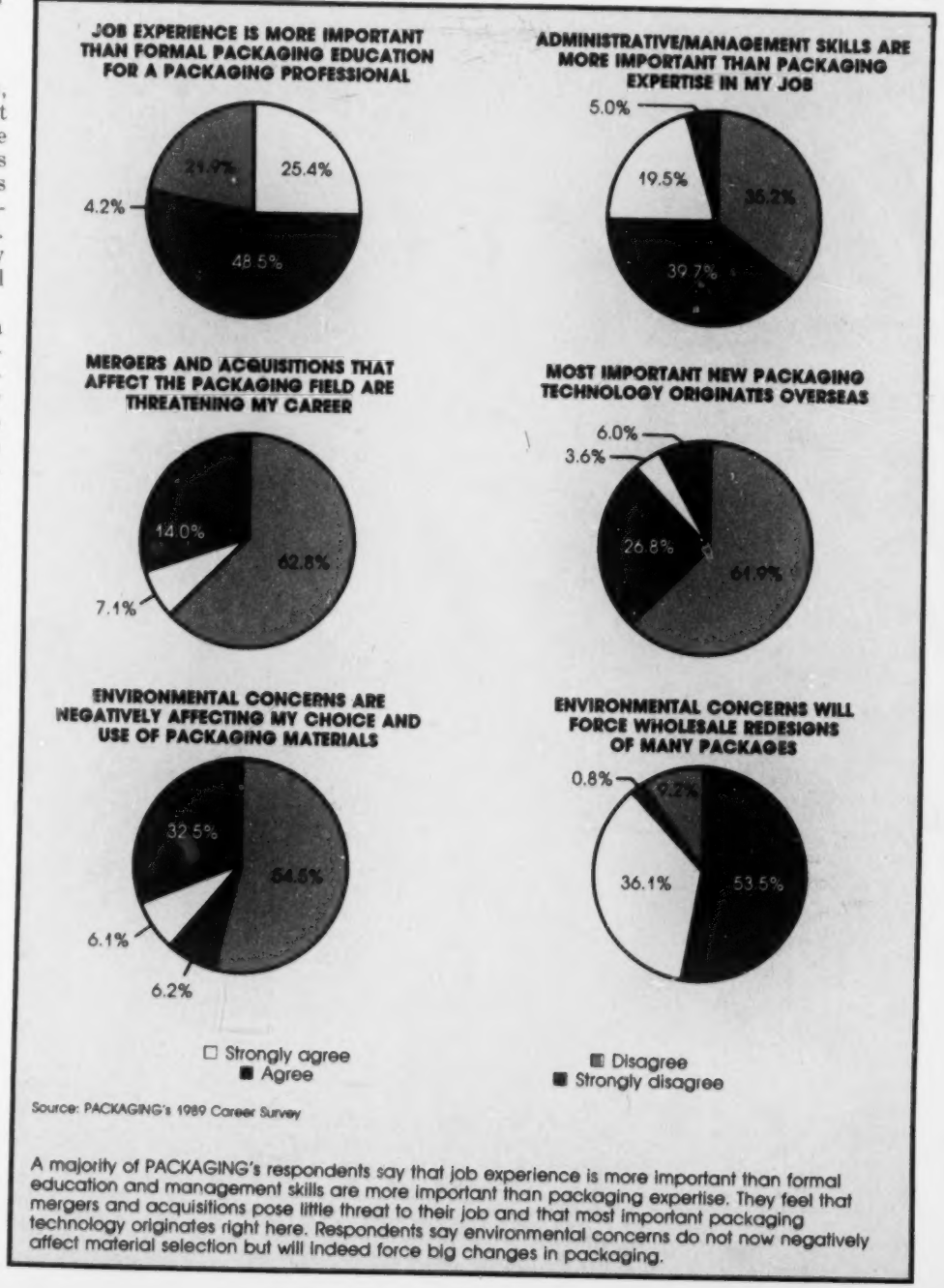
More of a concern if not a threat is the impact of environmental activism. Are environmental concerns already affecting the choice and use of packaging materials? More than 60 percent of our respondents say no. But will those issues eventually force wholesale redesigns of many packages? Almost 90 percent say yes. Moreover, when asked to list factors that will drive future change in the packaging field, close to 60 percent put environmental concerns at the top. Factors including cost control, profit improvement and advances in technology, materials and machinery lag far behind.

In dealing with the environmental impact of packaging and other concerns, packagers responding to our survey say some changes in thinking will be necessary. But interestingly, they do not accuse environmentalists, legislators or consumers of widespread wrongheadedness. Rather, they say, if packaging is to meet the challenges of the next decade, the biggest change in attitude will have to be brought about by company upper management.

In interviews for other stories, our editors occasionally hear comments that the U.S. is falling behind in packaging technology. That appears to be changing for the better. Last year in our survey, only 51 percent of respondents disagreed with that contention. This year, 66 percent disagree.

It's a cliche of the resume-writing pursuit to state a preference for a "challenging" career. Whether they put it on their resumes or not, it looks as though our respondents manage to find such jobs. Across all age groups surveyed, that adjective is by far the one most often used by our subjects to describe their position in packaging.

Maybe because their jobs are so challenging, our respondents seldom call them boring. They are, in this order, more often termed re-



Source: PACKAGING's 1989 Career Survey

A majority of PACKAGING's respondents say that job experience is more important than formal education and management skills are more important than packaging expertise. They feel that mergers and acquisitions pose little threat to their job and that most important packaging technology originates right here. Respondents say environmental concerns do not now negatively affect material selection but will indeed force big changes in packaging.

This year, only 44 percent of our respondents called themselves underpaid

warding, especially by those respondents in their 50s; fun, mostly by the very young and those in their 40s; routine but satisfying, mostly by those in their late 50s; and frustrating.

Talking bennies

Of the benefits not now available to them, which ones would our respondents most like to have? The most widely desired and the percentages of respondents listing them as such are stock options, 14.6; profit sharing, 11.0; company car, 10.0; dental insurance, 7.9; child care, 6.7. Stock options, profit sharing and cars are far more popular among the men; flex time and child care are of much greater interest to women.

The average salary continues to rise—from an average $44,179 in 1987 to $48,577 in 1988 and on to about $7,000 more than that this year. In

1988, about 49 percent of our respondents said they felt underpaid. This year that figure dropped to 44 percent.

In general, it seems, the professionals we surveyed this year think the packaging field is a pretty good place to work. ■

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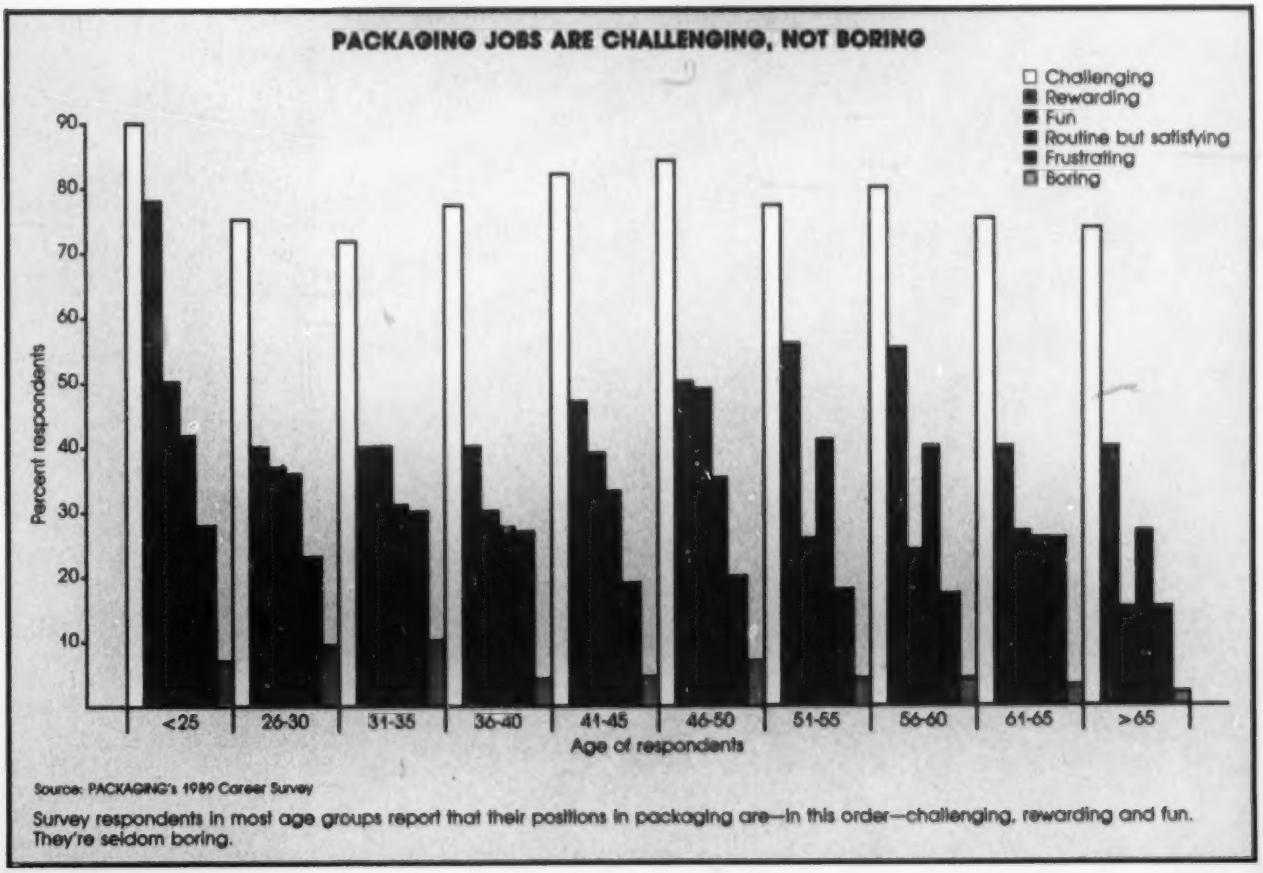
Outstanding	447
Above Average	448
Average	449
Below Average	450

GREG ERICKSON
Senior Editor

"Because we want to know how good a job we at PACKAGING are doing, we ask our Career Survey subjects to rank topics in order of importance to their career and rate our coverage of them. The results are gratifying. Rest assured we'll continue providing such information. We're here, after all, to help make our readers' jobs more productive and enjoyable."



Source: PACKAGING's 1989 Career Survey

Survey respondents in most age groups report that their positions in packaging are—in this order—challenging, rewarding and fun. They're seldom boring.

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Cover: Loring Nelson-Curry. **Mislabeling:** Jack Grossman, Images Photographics. **Career Survey:** Mark Berlow. **Plant of the Month:** Jim Sink, Artech Inc. **Inspection:** Courtesy Hyde Park Electronics, Krones Inc., Leader Systems Inc. **PPI:** Jack Grossman, Images Photographics.

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